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STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR XXXX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

[1](#)1. Mideast

[1](#)2. Iran

Key stories in the media:

Ha'aretz reported that Deputy Prime Minister Eli Yishai asked former U.S. President Jimmy Carter on Monday to tell Hamas leaders, including Khaled Mashal, that he would like to meet in order to

expedite a prisoner exchange to bring home Gilad Shalit. Yishai's bureau said he did not ask PM Ehud Olmert for permission to hold the meeting, nor did he tell Olmert what he discussed. Ha'aretz quoted Yishai as saying that other Israeli officials erred in boycotting Carter. During the meeting, he told Carter that he opposed the former president's use of the term "apartheid" in his book about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Yishai said Carter told him that the interpretation of his use of the word was fundamentally wrong. Speaking on Israel Radio this morning, diplomatic-security cabinet member Rafi Eitan said that only the government was entitled to decide on contacts with Hamas.

The Jerusalem Post reported that senior defense officials have told the newspaper that Iran has stepped up its efforts to smuggle weapons into Gaza by using floatable devices that it drops in the waters off the coast to be picked up by Palestinian fishermen. In another story, the paper carried comments by Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu that Israel will ultimately have to "bring down" the Hamas regime in Gaza, and this can be done in a way that does not necessitate a permanent return to the Strip. Netanyahu further said that if the Olmert government did not know how to stop the Gaza attacks, "let them clear the way for people who can do it a lot better." In an interview with Makor Rishon-Hatzofe, Netanyahu was quoted as saying that if elected prime minister, he won't carry out any peace deal with the Palestinians reached by PM Olmert.

Israel Radio reported that today the Construction and Housing Ministry published tenders for construction of 100 housing units in two settlements -- Elkana and Ariel. The radio quoted Peace Now as saying that this would spell the end of peace efforts with the Palestinians.

Israel Radio quoted PA President Mahmoud Abbas as saying on Al Arabiya-TV that Olmert told him that Jerusalem was entirely Israeli, to which Abbas replied: "So why did you place it on the table?"

All media reported that yesterday the IDF thwarted an attempted terror attack on the Kerem Shalom crossing into Gaza. Gunmen opened fire on the Israeli side of the crossing, but a patrol of IDF soldiers located nearby fired back, killing one gunman and wounding another, who fled with a third gunman into the Strip. Media also reported that yesterday Palestinians fired on Israeli fuel trucks at the Nahal Oz terminal that brings kerosene to Gaza. Leading electronic media reported that in the Nablus refugee camp of Balata this morning IDF troops killed Hani Ka'beh, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades activist who was behind a plan to poison diners at a Ramat-Gan restaurant.

Ha'aretz reported that a group of Jewish settlers in Hebron insulted and threatened a visiting German parliamentary delegation touring the city yesterday.

Citing AP, The Jerusalem Post's web site quoted former U.S. President Jimmy Carter as saying after meeting with Hamas officials in Cairo that Israel's blockade of the Gaza Strip is an "atrocity." Carter was also quoted as saying that he had asked Hamas officials to stop rocket attacks into Israel and defended his controversial meetings with the Palestinian terrorist group, saying it was necessary to talk to all parties to achieve peace. Major media reported that in an interview with The Washington Post, Gaza-based Hamas leader Mahmoud Zahar compared Gaza to the Warsaw Ghetto.

Ha'aretz reported that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice told reporters yesterday that "Syria is most certainly an issue in proliferation."

Yediot reported that Egypt will complete a high-power cable from El Arish to Gaza within two years. The power line is supposed to replace Israel's electricity supply to Gaza.

Leading media reported that yesterday the B'Tselem human rights organization demanded a criminal investigation into the death of Reuters cameraman Fadel Shana'a in Gaza on Wednesday. It said that its own investigation, combined with the results of Shana'a's autopsy as reported in the media, showed that Shana'a was killed by a Flechette shell fired by the IDF. Ha'aretz reported that Jerusalem Mayor Uri Lupoliansky is planning to enlist world Jewry in a fund-raising drive for East Jerusalem's

Arabs, in a bid to counter Hamas influence in local schools. The money will be used mainly for educational projects in the east of the city, where an acute classroom shortage means many pupils end up in schools identified with Hamas and the PA.

The Jerusalem Post reported that Israel will fortify its presence in space next week when Israel Aerospace Industries launches the Amos 3 communications satellite from Kazakhstan.

Yediot reported that PM Olmert has clarified that he will not give evidence to State Comptroller Micha Lindenstrauss regarding the Jonathan Pollard affair, Olmert told Yediot that "what I discuss with the President of the U.S. does not regard anyone." Yediot reported that Lindenstrauss threatened to summon Olmert.

Leading media reported that the Justice Ministry's Police Investigations Department announced yesterday that no indictments will be issued or measures taken against police officers accused of shooting demonstrators during the riots in the Israeli-Arab village of Peki'in in October 2007. A Justice Ministry release said that no direct tie could be made between specific events cited by those shot and specific shots fired by police personnel. Ha'aretz reported that privately police officials are pleased with decision while residents were "not surprised". Druze spiritual leader Sheikh Mowafaq Tarif said that "Those who used live fire must answer for it."

Maariv and other media reported that the GOI's Central Bureau of Statistics has announced that the unemployment rate has decreased by 4.4% over the past four years to 6.5%. Ha'aretz reported that IBM will announce today that it is purchasing the Israeli start-up Diligent for \$165 million. The newspaper noted that IBM has spent almost \$500 million on three Israeli start-ups in the past four months. The media reported that Moody's has raised Israel's credit rating for the third time in a year. Maariv reported that a delegation of 35 Chinese business leaders from Harbin will come to Israel for a meeting with their Israeli counterparts, and discuss cooperation projects worth \$13 billion.

Makor Rishon-Hatzofe published the results of a Maagar Mohot poll
Q: Should Israel make preemptive military strike on Iran?
No: 51%; yes: 35%; 14% were undecided.
Q: (Among the supporters of a Kadima-Labor merger.) Who should head the merger?
Barak: 38%; Olmert: 30%; 32% were undecided.

1. Mideast:

Summary:

The independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized: "The IDF must make every effort to thwart every attempt to harm the residents of the south.... [But] no military action -- whether a revenge attack or the renewed occupation of the Gaza Strip -- will lead to real calm."

The nationalist, Orthodox Makor Rishon-Hatzofe editorialized: "It would be a mistake to keep to the routine and treat the Palestinian-Nazi messages as noise that should be ignored."

Washington correspondent Hilary Leila Krieger wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post: "The U.S. and Israel are having one of their most public disputes since the second Bush administration took office in 2001. And the issue, once again, is over the settlements."

Block Quotes:

1. "All of Gaza Can't Be Razed"

The independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized (4/18): " Hamas can be blamed for the latest conflagration in the Gaza Strip.... [But] the IDF operation after Wednesday's fatal ambush left the impression that once again, Israel acts only out of revenge.... The inevitable outcome of such an ostentatious display of force was that more than 20 Palestinians were killed in one day, including a journalist and several minors. When Israel resorts to such indiscriminate shooting, it is playing by Hamas's rules -- launching an attack that leads to a retaliation with numerous casualties, which leads to another attack, and so on and so forth, as if it were an endless gang war.... The IDF must make every effort to thwart every attempt to harm the residents of the south -- but only through targeted operations. At the same time, the statesmen must make every attempt to reach a political agreement -- even if it is only temporary -- to calm the area down. No military action -- whether a revenge attack or the renewed occupation of the Gaza Strip -- will lead to real calm."

II. "From the Warsaw Ghetto to Netanyahu's Park Hotel"

The nationalist, Orthodox Makor Rishon-Hatzofe editorialized (4/18): "On April 19, on Passover Eve [1943], the Warsaw Ghetto uprising started.... It is no fluke that the most monstrous terrorist attack also took place on Passover Eve. Tomorrow six years will have gone by since the Passover Eve massacre at the Park Hotel [in Netanya].... The massacre changed our perception of the enemy and the Israel Defense Forces' way of fighting. Immediately on the next day the IDF embarked on the large-scale Operation Defensive Shield.... It would be a mistake to keep to the routine and treat the Palestinian-Nazi messages as noise that should be ignored.... The time has come, like on Passover 2002, to embark on a similar operation that will limit the strength and capability of the Gazan enemy. Every senior IDF officer ... will tell you that the IDF has a military solution for Gaza. We need diplomatic decision and determination by our leadership.... It is no longer possible to play by the rules of an enemy such as Hamas in Gaza."

III. "Deconstructing the Debate"

Washington correspondent Hilary Leila Krieger wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (4/18): "Today, [as opposed to 1992], while no loan guarantees have been withheld, and American Jewry hasn't been mobilized, the U.S. and Israel are having one of their most public disputes since the second Bush administration took office in 2001. And the issue, once again, is over the settlements.... The current circumstances have pushed the issue onto the front burner. While it has yet to boil over, Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas's tenuous position, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's political vulnerabilities, and America's new role of Roadmap monitor have all added fuel to the fire... [According to David Wurmser, who advised Vice President Dick Cheney on the Middle East], the relationship between the two countries and the process governing the settlements has been changing, since the U.S. has assumed its new position monitoring the Roadmap, as agreed to in Annapolis.. 'By setting up a monitoring force, you're taking a step toward an internationalization of the settlement issue, and that's a very dangerous precedent for Israel,' he said.... The, he concluded, 'will lead to a tension,' because the way the Israeli and the U.S. define settlements differs.'"

12. Iran:

Summary:

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: "As Iranian leaders employ disinformation, obduracy and guile to keep the world powers spinning their wheels, we hear Prime Minister Ehud Olmert insisting that Iran's efforts will, at the end of the day, fail. [But] the mullahs take their extremist Islam very seriously."

Block Quotes:

"The Price of Freedom"

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (4/18):
"Never in the ebb and flow of its long, rich and complicated history has the Jewish people experienced greater national, political and personal freedoms than it enjoys now. There are no ghetto walls. We are Jews by choice and we identify with the Jewish past, share in the Jewish present and look toward a common future.... [However,] given the threats the Jewish global collective faces, stemming mainly from the menace of Islamist extremism, Jews had better stop dissipating their energies and resources in internal bickering. Iran is hurrying to build nuclear weapons and the ballistic missiles to deliver them.... As Iranian leaders employ disinformation, obduracy and guile to keep the world powers spinning their wheels, we hear Prime Minister Ehud Olmert insisting that Iran's efforts will, at the end of the day, fail. The mullahs take their extremist Islam very seriously. It is the bedrock of their perverted vision of world domination. In this 'season of our freedom' [Passover] we need to recommit to our own Jewish and humane values. And if we cherish our freedom, we need to recognize that it comes at a price."

JONES